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# Zachary Austin Doleshal, *In the Kingdom of Shoes: Bata Zlín, Globalization, 1894 – 1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021)

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machines, intensifying their labour under more alienating, dangerous, and authoritarian conditions of work.

With the prospect of the Amazonification of various sectors of the economy, Delfanti's ultimate point is that technological innovation and automation can never be emancipatory when wielded by the grip of digital capital. Without broad democratic participation, technological evolution will only further subdue and disempower workers. The author ends his book with a survey of the existing terrain of worker struggles within Amazon's FCS, from small acts of daily resistance to unionization efforts and networks of grassroots worker collectives. Given Amazon's steady path to monopoly power, Delfanti offers a sober suggestion: a broad multi-issue, cross-class coalitional, and transnational forms of coordinated resistance alongside a strong regulatory state are needed if Amazon's power is to be reined in. With this in mind, future research is needed to further interrogate the political implications of Amazon's top-down imposition of employment transience on workers' subjectivities and their capacity to change the course of technological evolution. What are the conditions under which a transnational resistance can be borne, especially in the near-future context of outsourcing warehousing work or the recruitment of temporary migrant workers from the Global South amid rising sentiments of economic nationalism in the Global North?

Delfanti's account succeeds in painting a vivid picture of working at Amazon's warehouses, and will be of interest to multi-disciplinary scholars in the areas of work and technology, as well as workers, union organizers, and labour and community activists working towards more just futures.

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**Zachary Austin Doleshal, *In the Kingdom of Shoes: Bata Zlin, Globalization, 1894–1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021)**

A COLD WAR ERA shopping mall in Canada was home to a range of stores, and shoe retailer Bata was usually one of them. Bata was popularly considered the creation of Czechoslovakian émigré Thomas Bata and was associated with Bata's company town, Batawa, which is located in south-eastern Ontario. Zachary Austin Doleshal's insightful book *In the Kingdom of Shoes: Bata Zlin, Globalization, 1894–1945* reveals that the Bata story is far more complex than Canadian consumers may have imagined. Doleshal is a clinical assistant professor of history at Sam Houston State University. He engaged in extensive primary source research to complete this book, and is clearly able to read Czech. Doleshal's efforts resulted in a book that covers several historical subfields, including business and management, globalization, labour and working-class, the history of both world wars, gender and ethnicity, and technology. A lot of ground is covered in this work.

The Bat'a story – this is in fact the correct spelling of the name, although the Anglicized version is known in Canada and elsewhere – begins with an ambitious family making shoes in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Germany more readily comes to mind when Canadians and Americans think about World War I and the Central Powers that were on one side of the conflict, but the Austro-Hungarian Empire was also a key combatant. Many of the countries that now comprise eastern and south-eastern Europe, including modern Czechia, were part of that empire, although it was a decidedly unstable edifice that collapsed as the war ended. The founding and expansion of the Bat'a company was principally

led by Tomáš Bat'a, and Doleshal convincingly demonstrates that Tomáš was brighter than his siblings. The Thomas Bata who became synonymous with the firm's Canadian operations and the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto was the son of Tomáš.

Eastern Europe is not generally regarded in business and management history as a significant home of capitalist innovation, but Doleshal ably reveals that the Bat'a family sought inspiration from abroad to build an organization that became a major international corporation and an excessively influential force in Czechoslovakian society. Tomáš Bat'a was an admirer of American management methods, held Henry Ford in great esteem, and visited the United States to learn how successful American capitalists ran their factories. He, in some ways, exceeded the aspirations of Ford and other early 20th century industrial employers by commanding the attention of government officials in his country in a way that Ford and others could not manage in the United States.

Bat'a crucially perfected a form of welfare capitalism that went beyond what management in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom were able to develop during the interwar years. Zlín, a relatively small town that is close to the current border between Czechia and Slovakia, became the home of the Bat'a Shoe Company, and it should have perhaps been renamed Bat'a, such was the impact that the firm had on the community. Zlín and the region surrounding it were controlled by Bat'a to an extent that exceeded what most other industrial employers managed to establish. Most crucially, the company town became the preferred model for Bat'a management. Hence, Zlín was the progenitor of Batawa.

The company was highly aware of the ethnic and class diversity of Czechoslovakia in the interwar years

and, like other practitioners of welfare capitalism, assiduously recruited workers who would be devoted, productive, and not cause any trouble. Any sort of worker agitation was swiftly quashed. A 1938 manager's guidebook advised "a gram of allegiance is better than a pound of intelligence" and hiring decisions were made in accordance with that view. Efforts to build employee loyalty largely succeeded. Workers and their children attended Bat'a schools in Zlín, lived in company housing, shopped at company stores, and attended social events sanctioned by management. Their lives, like those of workers at Ford Motor Company living in Dearborn, Michigan, were carefully monitored by management to ensure that bad habits were not developed. An obsession with cleanliness in all its forms prevailed.

Bat'a expanded operations around the world including India, Indonesia, and Malaysia in the 1930s and 1940s. Foreign dignitaries came to Zlín to get a close view of the company's methods and operations. The firm was able to achieve a notable feat in consistently presenting itself as a local enterprise in whatever country it operated. The Bat'a's name came first, with its roots in Czechoslovakia coming a distant second. Cadres of managers trained in Zlín, known as *Batocivi*, went abroad to replicate what was done at home. Ten towns around the world were named after the company by 1939. It was a dominant player in the global shoe business.

Family-owned firms often encounter difficulty when changes in leadership occur, and this fate befell Bat'a. Tomáš died in a 1932 plane crash and was replaced by his brother Jan. Changes in leadership can be perilous for any organization, and the change at Bat'a was compounded by rising social and political unrest in Europe. Jan Bat'a was prone to publicly commenting on social and political

events – he spoke admiringly of Benito Mussolini – and his views in turn reflected negatively on the firm. Events began to spin beyond the control of Jan Bat'a and anyone else in Czechoslovakia when Nazi Germany annexed the Sudetenland in 1938. The Bat'a company scrambled to respond to the coming of World War II.

The history that Canadians know of Bat'a is rooted in decisions that were made as the war began. Thomas Bata, Jr. moved to Canada and aligned himself with the Allied countries. In contrast, his uncle Jan managed to alienate the United States government. Jan Bat'a was not prevented from leaving Europe by Nazi Germany, although the company's factories were incorporated into the German war supply apparatus. Jan Bat'a moved to Brazil and became considered Brazilian as much as Czech. Thomas Bata, Jr. became the public face of the company, a pillar of the Canadian business community, and a capitalist cold warrior.

This book is invaluable because it provides a different perspective than is usually found in English language historiography, especially on issues of concern to both labour and management historians. Some readers will doubtless wish that Doleshal had gone further with his narrative. For example, the Bat'a company both facilitated the movement of Jewish employees out of Europe while also using slave labour during the war. More discussion on how the firm fit into Nazi wartime production would be helpful, but there may also be limitations on what is available in archives. Latin American historians may well be curious about Jan Bat'a's possible interaction with fascist political movements in Brazil. The end of the Cold War, the Bat'a family's return to Czechoslovakia, and the relocation of its head office to Switzerland also merit scrutiny. Doleshal will hopefully consider such topics in future publications. In the meantime, it is abundantly

clear that there is much more to the history of Bata than an average mall shopper would have suspected when walking past one of the company's stores years ago.

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**Julietta Hua and Kasturi Ray, *Spent Behind the Wheel: Drivers' Labor in the Uber Economy* (University of Minnesota Press, 2021)**

IN *SPENT BEHIND the Wheel*, Julietta Hua and Kasturi Ray adopt sociological and legal perspectives to examine contemporary professional passenger driving, focusing on Uber drivers' labour in the gig economy. Drawing on interviews with drivers, driver-organizers, and members of licensing commissions, as well as legal archives and regulatory documents related to the passenger driving industry, Hua and Ray reveal that professional passenger driving is essentially a form of reproductive labour, in which the extraction of driver vitality and liveliness is naturalized by racial and biopolitical logics. Despite some changes in operations brought by the technology, app-hail transportation companies largely sustain existing industry standards and share the colonial accumulation and exploitation logics with traditional taxi companies.

The book is divided into 4 chapters that focus on topics including debt and ownership, compensation and insurance, ticketing and criminalization, and accommodation and disability justice. Chapter 1, "It's Not the App: The Labor of Driving," introduces the regulatory context of the passenger-ride industry from a historical perspective. Hua and Ray argue that ownership equating to greater mobility and freedom is an illusion advocated across the professional passenger-ride industry. Ownership of the right to drive is what obscures the extractive